

**Proclamation 6939—National Children's Day, 1996**

*October 11, 1996*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Our Nation benefits when every American child is truly valued and cherished. We have no greater responsibility or hope for our future than our children, and the promise of a better tomorrow depends upon the love, support, education, and encouragement that we give to each of them. It is up to all of us—parents and families, schools, churches, and community organizations—to join in the critical endeavor of putting the needs of our children first. Only when we reaffirm our commitment to our children's well-being can we truly say that we are prepared for the challenges that await us in the next century.

America is a country of many blessings—a rich land, a thriving democracy, a diverse and determined people. Our culture is built on faith in freedom, and opportunity, and on the spirit of community. In a Nation of such infinite promise, too many of our children face great obstacles in reaching their full potential, and it is imperative that we not turn our backs on them.

Because safety, health, a clean environment, quality education, and economic security are the keys to a brighter future, they are necessary investments in the healthy growth and development of our children. Through measures such as expanding Head Start and child care, preserving Medicaid, enhancing child protection, protecting the environment, and increasing educational opportunity for all students, my Administration has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that every child has the tools to become a productive citizen.

As we work together in a spirit of community, let us seek to instill confidence, hope, pride, and self-esteem in our young people. Because today's children are tomorrow's leaders, educators, and parents, all of us—adults and children—forever will benefit from this commitment.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,**  
President of the United States of America,

by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 13, 1996, as National Children's Day. I urge all Americans to express their love and appreciation, not only on this day but also on all days, for their children and all of the children of this Nation. I invite Federal officials, State and local governments, and particularly the American family, to join in observing this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities to honor our Nation's children.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:33 a.m., October 15, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 12, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 16.

**Proclamation 6940—Columbus Day, 1996**

*October 11, 1996*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Throughout our history, America has been inspired by the courage and daring of Christopher Columbus. Like him, we are a people who dare to dream, to chart a bold course, and to surmount formidable obstacles to reach new horizons.

Columbus' arrival in North America not only confirmed his beliefs about our planet, but also initiated an epic struggle between the Old and New Worlds. Yet out of that triumphant voyage and the meeting of many peoples developed a Nation and a way of life vastly unlike those Columbus left behind.

The expedition that Columbus—an Italian supported by the Spanish Crown—began more than 500 years ago, continues today as we experience and celebrate the vibrant in-

fluences of varied civilizations, not only from Europe, but also from around the world. America is stronger because of this diversity, and the democracy we cherish flourishes in the great mosaic we have created since 1492. Americans of Italian and Spanish heritage can be particularly proud, not only of Columbus' achievements, but also of their own contributions to our country.

As we honor and remember Christopher Columbus, let us use his example as a beacon to help guide us into the 21st century. His life, his voyages, and—above all—his vision can inspire us as we prepare for the challenges that lie ahead. Let us remember that all of us, regardless of our origins, are important participants in that journey, and that our uncertainty about what lies over the horizon should not shake our faith that, together, we will succeed.

In recognition of Columbus' epic achievement, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934 (48 Stat. 657), and an Act of June 28, 1968 (82 Stat. 250), has requested the President to proclaim the second Monday in October of each year as "Columbus Day."

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 14, 1996, as Columbus Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

**William J. Clinton**

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## **The President's Radio Address**

*October 12, 1996*

**The President.** Good morning. Today is Columbus Day, marking the day an Italian explorer came upon the New World. It's a day that holds special significance and much pride for Italian-Americans, Spanish- and Hispanic-Americans, and all Americans who dare to dream and reach for new horizons. All of these people have shaped who we are, and today we all celebrate their contributions.

We can only imagine the beauty of the land the explorers found. In the centuries since as we grew, our environment and resources often paid a price. Some have been depleted, destroyed, endangered, and some, thankfully, have been preserved, restored, and replenished. This doesn't just happen. Every generation must work to ensure that the next generation can enjoy the blessings of America in clean air and pure water. We must work to pass upon to our children the Earth that God gave us.

In just a few moments, I'll sign into law a bill to help us protect our environment, the Water Resources Development Act. And with me here in the Oval Office is someone who has devoted much of his life to a better environment, our Vice President, Al Gore. I'd like him to tell you what this bill will do.

*[At this point, Vice President Gore explained that the bill would advance the administration's commitment to save the Everglades and Florida Bay by ensuring clean and abundant water, strengthening the relationship between the Federal Government and the State of Florida, and giving the Army Corps of Engineers new tools and authority to protect the Nation's water resources.]*

**The President.** Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

This new law reflects our commitment to manage wisely our Nation's water resources and preserve the environment even as we balance the budget, but our work is not done. Today I am also announcing my intention to sign the parks bill which Congress has approved. This bill will create or improve almost 120 national parks, trails, rivers, or historical sites in 41 of our States. It will pre-